



University of Colorado

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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President Bruce Benson's newsletter ^[1]

A Message from the President

October 2017

Dear Alumni and Friends,

CU is often named in rankings of universities, but a recent one is particularly notable. The four campuses that comprise the CU system were 29th (up from 45th last year) in Reuters' annual ranking ^[2] of the world's most innovative universities.

It's really no surprise when you consider the staggering number and significance of innovations that emerge from our university. It's sometimes difficult for me to keep up with their pace, and I have been continually amazed in my time here to learn about the exceptional work of our faculty and students and its impact on improving society and advancing knowledge.

It's also notable that all four of our campuses contributed to the recognition. We're a diverse university with unique programs and research expertise. Yet the common thread is that innovation is a mindset at CU and it pervades our campuses. Some examples illustrate.

Dr. Naresh Mandava and his team at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus implanted a microchip in the eye of a woman who had lost her sight in her 20s, allowing her to see (and see her son) for the first time in 15 years. She was the first person in the Mountain West to receive the bionic eye ^[3]. Special eyeglasses with a small camera on the nose piece transmit what she sees to a video processing unit, which routes a signal back to the glasses and then to the implant in her eye.

Our Colorado Springs campus was the first in the country to offer a Bachelor of Innovation degree ^[4], an interdisciplinary program originally between the colleges of Engineering and Business and now expanded to include the colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Education. It uses a common core of innovation-focused courses and steeps students in cross-disciplinary teamwork and experiences working with companies on real problems. The program stresses the innovation process that transforms ideas into ways to address a variety of societal issues.

At CU Boulder, third-year mechanical engineering student Peter "Max" Armstrong developed and patented a low-cost system for fitting prosthetics [5] that dramatically lowers the price and improves fit. His system uses pre-manufactured shells that are customized with form-fitting foam. It will be a particular boon in developing countries, where prosthetics are often cost-prohibitive.

Our Charles C. Gates Center at CU Anschutz [6] explores how adult stem-cell therapy can be used for a variety of applications, from cancer treatment to regenerative tissue. Its remarkable success on a variety of fronts exemplifies innovation at CU.

CU Denver's Comcast Media and Technology Center [7] is a multidisciplinary center focused on the intersection of creativity, media and technology. It enables students from the College of Arts and Media and the College of Engineering and Applied Science to apply what they are learning in the classroom to solve real-world challenges.

CU Innovations brings together industry partners, entrepreneurs and investors to help our researchers improve the quality of life for patients and the world at large. Last fall they fostered a unique partnership among CU Anschutz, Children's Hospital Colorado and UHealth to explore new ways to transform patient experiences, the delivery of care and clinical outcomes.

CU Boulder researchers have developed an advanced drone "swarming" technology [8] that allows a single operator to control multiple unmanned aircraft for a variety of tasks, which could include searching for lost hikers or studying wildlife.

I could go on, but suffice to say our university meets its promise as one of the world's most innovative universities. Our staff participate as well. Each year we have an innovations contest in which departments bring forward ideas to help the university run more efficiently. Ideas included a better, more cost effective way to clean sensitive research laboratories and an idea for distributing drinking water at campus events that results in eliminating the use of thousands of plastic water bottles annually.

Good things happen when innovation is part of the institutional culture. We have great minds at our university ? among faculty, students and staff ? so when they are turned loose to innovate, they rise to the challenge. The results include better health care, improved technology, more patents and companies, and a stellar learning and working environment.

It's good that a prestigious international organization like Reuters publicly recognizes what we have known all along ? CU is a university of innovation.

For feedback, contact officeofthepresident@cu.edu [9]

Sincerely,



Bruce Benson
President

To receive President Benson's monthly newsletter, email us at contact@cu.edu [10].

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